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ABSTRACT

This booklet provides advice to young people seeking their first jobs on how to avoid the pitfalls that have caused others to lose jobs or fail to be hired. Topics discussed in short, one-page sections include appearance, attitude and behavior, ignorance of labor market facts, misrepresentation, sensitivity about a physical defect, unrealistic wage demands, absence or lateness without good reason, insufficient training, insistence on doing the job one's own way, balking at entry requirements, applying for a job with a friend along, inability to get along with others, and a reputation for unreliability. The booklet suggests that young people seek help in sharpening their job-seeking skills and obtaining a job through the New York State Job Service. (KC)

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Why Young People Fail to get and Hold Jobs

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TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

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NEW YORK LABOR Helping NY work

We're working to keep people working.

Letter from Gov. Cuomo

Thousands of young New Yorkers enter the job market every year. Because they are young and inexperienced, they sometimes make mistakes at employment interviews or on the job.

The state Department of Labor booklet lists the most common errors made and the ways to avoid making them.

It will prove useful to young people looking for jobs and to schools and community agencies.

Sincerely,

Mario M. Cuomo

Letter from Comr. Hartnett

Your first job is the stepping stone to your future career, and the advice in this booklet on how to appear at the job interview and how to perform on the job may give you an edge on the competition.

I also recommend that you let your local Job Service office help you. Their staff can provide vocational testing and counseling as well as aid you in your job search.

Good luck on locating that important first job.

Sincerely,

Thomas F. Hartnett

Your appearance

...can be the difference between getting the job and getting the "brush-off."

Take the case of Peter. He is 20 years old, in good health and a high school graduate. Even though he likes people and has an aptitude for sales work, he could not get a job. The reason for his failure was immediately apparent the moment he stepped into the Job Service office for help. He was dressed in sloppy jeans and a torn shirt. His hair was extra long and uncombed, and he needed a shave. The advice of his Job Service interviewer was to change his appearance or he wouldn't stand a chance. A fresh shirt, pressed trousers, a shave and haircut did the trick. He got the job to which he was referred by the Job Service.

And then there is Susan, age 18. She came to the Job Service with a very spotty work history; jobs lasting two or three months as a counter-girl, waitress, meat packer. She had her heart set on an office job, but with the impression she made, her chances of getting one were very slim. She dressed sloppily, chewed gum with sound effects and wore heavy makeup. Fortunately, Susan had the good sense to heed the advice of her Job Service counselor. She appeared at her next interview neatly dressed, with light makeup and without chewing gum. She not only got the job but, within a short time, got a promotion and a substantial raise as well.

The first impression you make is the one that counts most. Make sure it's a good one. Check your personal appearance. Men should be neat, clean, freshly shaved, with hair combed and shoes shined. Women should avoid heavy makeup, elaborate hairdos and gaudy jewelry.

Attitude and behavior

...play almost as important a part in getting and holding a job as does skill."

Carl lives with his married sister and brother-in-law who need his room for their own children. They told him he'd have to get a job and find a place of his own as soon as possible. He came to the New York State Job Service for help in finding work.

During his conference with a Job Service counselor, his attitude was "the world owes me a living." He was cocky, demanding and argumentative. The counselor discussed with Carl how to handle himself during an interview.

An appointment with an employer finally was arranged during which Carl disregarded all of the counselor's advice. When the employer told him how much the job paid, Carl immediately replied that his friends advised him not to work for those wages.

That ended the interview. The employer promptly phoned the counselor and said that he would not hire this applicant under any circumstances; his attitude and manner were so unsatisfactory that he felt he should not be referred again.

Anita was 17 years old and a high school graduate when she came to the Job Service. She had successfully completed a commercial course, including two years of typing and bookkeeping, and she was especially good with figures. For two summers she worked in the accounting office of a family friend, operating various types of business machines. Her skills were currently in demand. Even though she was only 17, she had poise, excellent appearance and seemed mature for her age. An immediate interview was arranged.

Despite all she had going for her, Anita did not get the job. The employer reported that she seemed interested in very little except the company benefits. Anita left the impression that she was interested only in what the firm could do for her and not in what she could contribute to the firm.

One of the most important things an employer wants to know is how interested you are in the job that is being offered.

Be friendly and enthusiastic when you tell about yourself. Convince the employer that you can do the work and that you really want the chance to prove it.

Ignorance of labor market facts

...can result in costly mistakes.

Richard, 17, was not the scholarly type, but he was mechanically inclined. After only one year of high school, where he had some shop training, he dropped out to take a job in a plant doing repair work.

He enjoyed his work and did so well that in a short time he got a raise. His prospects for future advancement seemed bright.

Then, Richard made his big mistake. He quit his job on hearing the rumor of higher wages paid elsewhere.

By the time he came to the Job Service for help, he had already spent several weeks looking for that better-paying job. The only thing he found in those agonizing few weeks was what he should have known before he quit; there was a substantial amount of unemployment in the area and jobs were hard to get.

Fortunately, something could be done for Richard. The Job Service was able to locate a job for him as a trainee at less pay than he previously earned, but with a good chance for advancement.

Leaving a job without having another to go to is risky business.

Be sure you know what the economic situation is and what your chances are of getting the position you're after before you quit your job.

Misrepresentation

...is bound to be discovered and work to your disadvantage.

Josephine was 16 years old when she quit school after completing the tenth grade. She was tall for her age and physically mature. By misrepresenting her age as 19, she was able to get a job as a cocktail waitress. The salary was good and so were the tips, but the job was short-lived.

It wasn't too long before her employer discovered that Josephine had lied about her age. He fired her on the spot. They both could have gotten into deep trouble as a result of this deception.

George wanted a job in construction. When an ad appeared in a local paper for experienced roofers, he applied. He was a pretty glib young man. Even though he had absolutely no experience, George managed to convince the employer that he was fully qualified and could handle the job. He was hired and told to report to a building project the next day, ready to work.

That afternoon, George went on a shopping trip and invested in the work clothes he needed for the job.

As it turned out, it was a poor investment. He had only been on the job a few minutes when it became obvious that he was totally unqualified. Naturally, he was immediately discharged.

If you want a good job and expect to keep it, be honest with your employer.

You may be found out if you're bluffing and will be the loser.

Sensitivity about a physical defect

...can be a serious obstacle to getting and holding a job, if you let it.

Harry, 21, had a skin ailment that caused brownish blotches on his face and neck, and this was very disturbing to him. In fact, when he came to the Job Service office, he kept his hat pulled down over his face to mask his disfigurement.

Harry's work record was spotty due to his concern about his appearance. He had worked at various part-time selling and office jobs for short periods but had not held a steady job since graduating from high school.

The Job Service interviewer recognized his trouble and convincingly explained to Harry that others were not aware of, or disturbed by, his skin ailment, and that wearing his hat during the interview only added to the problem by calling attention to it.

Before sending him out to be interviewed for a beginning office job, the interviewer discussed Harry's condition with the employer. He was hired and in a short time has come a long way toward overcoming his self-consciousness.

There is no denying that sensitivity about a physical defect can be a handicap, but it is a handicap that, with understanding, can be overcome.

Unrealistic wage demands

...usually mean you won't get the job.

Kathy, 18 years old and a commercial high school graduate, applied to the Job Service for a job as a stenographer. When asked about salary, she said she wouldn't work for less than $300 a week. Her reasoning was that, according to newspaper articles she had read, there was a shortage of stenographers and anyone who could take some dictation, type 30 words a minute and breathe could demand such a salary.

The Job Service counselor explained to Kathy that, without experience, her demands were too high. She was told what the going salary was for a beginning stenographer and that only with experience could she expect to advance and ultimately reach her goal.

This advice fell on deaf ears. Kathy refused to be interviewed for any job that paid less than her demand--even though some of the jobs discussed interested her in every aspect except salary.

If she persists in demanding more money than she is likely to get, Kathy will remain unemployed and her much-needed skills will suffer from disuse.

All through high school, John was a photography buff. He was a member of the camera club and spent most of his spare time taking pictures and processing them. After high school graduation, he took a six-month photography course.

When John came to the Job Service, he was referred to a job as a darkroom worker at the prevailing rate and was hired.

A month later, he quit and came to the Job Service office again. John felt that he was worth more money because another darkroom worker in the plant was being paid $20 more a week than he was.

While talking to the Job Service counselor, John realized for the first time how wrong he was to quit his job. Comparing the two jobs, he clearly saw that even though they both did the same work much of the time, the other employee had been there for three years and was called upon to do special work in emergencies.

After this insight, John was willing to accept another darkroom job at the same wages, or even less, if necessary.

A rash act can be costly. Be realistic about your demands. Carefully examine the situation and possible consequences before you make your decision.

Absence or lateness without good reason

...can cost you your job and could make if difficult for you to get another one.

Laurie wanted to be a keypunch operator. By the time she had finished her second year of high school she knew she wouldn't go on to college, so she took courses in typing and business arithmetic. After graduating from high school, she got a job as a keypunch operator trainee through the New York State Job Service.

Two months later, Laurie was back in the Job Service office looking for another job.

Her employer had fired her because of poor attendance and her lack of effort to correct it. Even though he was satisfied with her work, he couldn't have an employee who, all too often and without good reason, came to work late or didn't show up at all.

After that, she failed to get several other jobs she interviewed for because of the poor reference from her first employer. Laurie came back to the Job Service office completely discouraged, saying she would take any kind of job, any place, just to be able to correct her absentee record.

If it becomes necessary to stay away from your job, or to come to work late, be sure that you have a legitimate excuse and that you notify your employer as soon as possible.

Insufficient training

...is an obstacle to getting the job you want.

Patricia, age 17, left high school after three years in a commercial course because she was tired of school. An office job where she could use her limited ability at typing and shorthand was not immediately available. She finally took a job as a garment ticketer in a firm where she had previously worked one summer.

After about six months, Patricia became so bored with her work that she quit to get an office job. Her search proved fruitless. Finally she applied to the New York State Job Service office where she was tested for her office skills. It was found that her typing speed and accuracy were not up to standard and the elementary skills she did have when she quit school had deteriorated.

The Job Service counselor helped Patricia evaluate her current and potential skills and offered her a plan to follow.

Patricia got her job back as a ticketer and is now enrolled in night school to complete her high school education and brush up on her office skills.

Wanting a job is not enough. You must find out what the position requires and then prepare yourself to meet those requirements.

Insistence on doing the job your way

...most likely will create animosity and work to your disadvantage.

Fred, 20 years old, was looking for a clerical job with a chance for advancement. A student at evening college, he had completed a year's study of business administration. His appearance was satisfactory and he seemed to have no trouble getting clerical jobs. In fact, the record shows he had had quite a few.

When the Job Service referred him to a permanent clerical job with opportunities to move ahead, he was hired and then, in a very short time, was laid off.

Fred said he was let go because of lack of work. The employer, however, had another story; Fred did his job well, but was a constant source of annoyance to his co-workers and supervisor. Fred complained that the office was poorly managed, tried to introduce his own methods and even criticized the employer's own performance.

Recommended changes for improvements generally are welcome, but they must be reasonable suggestions, tactfully presented.

Balk at entry requirements

...and you are likely to miss your big opportunity.

Walter, 19, just completed a high school course in house wiring and motor repair. He preferred doing this kind of work but was willing to take any job in the electrical industry where he would have a chance to use his skills.

The Job Service referred him to a public utility company for a trainee job leading to various mechanical and technical positions. For the first three to six months he would be a messenger, then gradually work into the mechanical and technical levels.

Walter turned down the job because of the messenger duties, stating that since he was trained for electrical work he should not have to start as a delivery boy. He was not willing to accept the fact that the company was using the delivery job as a means of evaluating his ability to work with others and follow instructions, before advancing him to a technical job.

That cost him an opportunity with a reliable firm where the possibilities for promotion are exceptionally good.

Entry requirements serve an important purpose. They are used to gauge the potential of new employees.

Apply for a job with a friend along

...and you probably won't be hired.

When Helen, age 17, graduated from her high school commercial course, she was advised by her school guidance counselor to register for employment at the New York State Job Service office. Helen was a fair typist and had some knowledge of business machines. The Job Service referred her to a large insurance company.

When she appeared for the interview, two of her girl friends accompanied her. The employer, seeing Helen was not alone, asked he to fill out an application and told her she would be notified if "anything turned up." Helen came back to the Job Service office indignant that she had been referred to a firm where there really was no job.

The Job Service interviewer promptly phoned the employer to find out what went wrong. The employer reported Helen had brought two friends with her and that this indicated to him that she was not yet ready for a position with his firm. She had some growing up to do first.

Don't take anyone with you when you go for an interview. It's apt to give the employer the impression that you lack self-confidence and are not mature enough for the job.

Inability to get along with others

...is something few employers can, or will, tolerate.

Kurt, 18, had recently graduated from a vocational high school in the top third of his class. He majored in machine shop and wanted a beginning job in that field. To the Job Service counselor who interviewed him, he appeared to be a quiet, serious and pleasant young man.

The counselor called an employer who had an opening for a vocational high school graduate with at least one year of paid machine shop experience. Because of Kurt's rank in school and the counselor's description of him, the employer decided to waive the paid experience requirement. Kurt was interviewed by the personnel manager and the shop foreman, both of whom were impressed by his intelligence and personality. Kurt was hired.

A month later, however, the personnel manager called the Job Service office to say Kurt had been discharged. The chief reason was Kurt's inability to work with others. He was a constant irritant to his supervisor and the people he worked with. He questioned management decisions, although he was poorly informed. Whenever a fellow worker made a remark about anything from the weather to a shop problem, he would argue about it. It got so that other workers refused to have anything to do with him.

The employer said that, while Kurt was good enough at his work and undoubtedly was a bright young man, his inability to get along with other people had created too many problems for the firm. He had to let him go.

Skill alone will not guarantee you your job. It takes the combination of skill and the ability to get along and work well with others.

A reputation for unreliability

...can wreck your future.

Jerry, 18, had been in the labor market for almost two years since leaving school in the tenth grade. With a pleasing appearance and likeable manner, he made a good first impression.

But, since leaving school, Jerry had held some fifteen different jobs; one lasted three months, most of the others only one or two weeks. The last time he applied for a job, the employer refused even to take his application.

After he registered with the Job Service every effort was made to get Jerry another job. However, with his poor work record and limited education, his prospects for a job with a future were not too bright.

Frances, age 21, came to the Job Servie office wanting to do public contact work. Her appearance and personality were so outstanding that an opening for her was solicited with one of the leading airlines. She was sent to Washington for an interview and hired immediately. Upon completion of air hostess training, she was assigned to regular flight duty.

After six months, Frances reappeared at the Job Service office. An airline executive revealed the reason. "Air travel is like the mail service," he said. "A scheduled flight must always go through, weather conditions permitting. Hostesses and pilots must always be ready to fly. Only the most serious illness prevents them from carrying out their assigned tasks. On several occasions this young lady gave the excuse of not feeling too well and refused to take the scheduled flight. We therefore decided to dispense with her services."

In spite of her outstanding qualities, Frances lost not only this job, but will be seriously handicapped in finding future employment because the airline will not give her a good reference.

A reputation for being reliable is one of the greatest assets a person can have. Don't do anything to tarnish your good image.

Could you use Employment Counseling?

If you have trouble getting and keeping jobs and are wondering why, ASK FOR EMPLOYMENT COUNSELING.

A specially trained counselor helps you to choose a field of work, prepare for it and get started on a job.

You talk over your interests, work experience, training, leisure activities, and other important work-related events in your life. You may take aptitude measures and interest inventories to help you decide what kinds of jobs are best for you.

After you and the counselor review your abilities and things standing in the way of your finding work, the counselor will give you information about occupational requirements and job opportunities in different fields. Then, together, you work on your vocational plan, which involves learning how to find a job and keep it.

STATE OF NEW YORK
Mario M. Cuomo, Governor

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
Thomas F. Hartnett, Commissioner

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